



REPORT
(CAC Project 5169)

I. Change of Location

- a. At the request of the commission, Weequahic was substituted for Vailsburg as the community to be the focal point of this project

II. Informal interviews by CAC staff members

- a. The purpose of these informal interviews was to identify unrecognized leaders (informal leaders) in the Weequahic area.
- b. Findings from approximately fifty-four such interviews
 1. Lack of leadership perceived by residents
 - (a) "I don't know anyone in this place who is interested in anything happening here. The trouble is that we don't have any leaders". (a business woman in her 40's)
 - (b) "We have no neighborhood councils or business groups concerned with further development of the community." (a proprietor of a store in his late 20's)
 - (c) "Even the Rabbi has no influence today on conditions in this community". (proprietor of a small business, a resident of Weequahic for 40 years, about 60 yrs of age)
 - (d) "Even the ward boss isn't a leader anymore". (an old timer - retired)
 - (e) "None of the young people are stupid enough to stay, around here. All that's left are us oldsters and we're too tired to lead anything" (a retired business man, formerly an officer of the C of C)
 2. Awareness and fear of recent "crime wave"
 - (a) "I have to close my store by six because of the hold-ups on Osborne Terrace". (Proprietor of a dry cleaning establishment in his late 60's)
 - (b) "We have had a lot of crimes around here lately. I know three people who were mugged recently". (man in his early 50's)
 - (c) "Some people over on Leslie Street were mugged last week and a neighbor, a close friend of mine, was physically assaulted on Hawthorne Avenue". (a middle-aged housewife)
 - (d) "This isn't a handkerchief making a bulge in my pocket. I'll take care of myself." (a middle aged business man)

3. Awareness of a continually changing population in Weequahic
 - (a) "There is nothing new about a changing population in Weequahic. Originally there was an emigration of Germans, then they were replaced by Jewish families. Now the Negroes are moving in" (a man in his late 50's or early 60's)

- (b) "I've seen lots of changes in this community and I hope to live to see a lot more. I can't remember a time when the population here wasn't changing. It's bound to happen" (a man about 45 years old)
- (c) "This transition is true in lots of places. Here we saw the Germans move in, then the Jews and now the Negroes and the Puerto Ricans will start moving in and they'll push the Negroes out". (an elderly gentleman)

4. "City Hall" as perceived by residents

- (a) "The Mayor is doing a good job. The taxes are too high but this situation wouldn't change under a new form of government". (the father of a 17 yr. old high school student)
- (b) "People used to go to a ward boss for help in getting a job. This is how the bosses gained votes in return for favors. This isn't true under the present set-up, and it's a good thing". (an attorney about to retire)
- (c) "The police are doing a good job. They have been patrolling this neighborhood more regularly and this has had a stabilizing effect generating more confidence in both the white and the colored families in the neighborhood". (a physician)
- (d) "I have given over forty hours of my time to "city hall" and one commission after another. What happened? Nothing! I'm not going to waste any more of my time". (proprietor about 45 years of age)
- (e) "The commissioners take an oath of office, don't they? Then why don't they do something about this situation instead of shining the shoes of all the guys in "City Hall"

5. Organizational strength or weakness in Weequahic

- (a) "The trouble with this community is that all of the business groups and neighborhood councils are dead. If they are not dead, they either do nothing or set out to fight some specific cause. Working with groups like that is a waste of time" (a very young and apparently successful businessman)
- (b) "I knew about the Osborne Terrace Association. It started out alright but it's not so active now". (middle aged technician)
- (c) "Our Chamber of Commerce has been dead for years. Now it's in bankruptcy and that's where it belongs, as I see it". (a middle-aged banker)
- (d) "The men who could do something for us in our local organization don't give a damn about Weequahic they are big shots! They work in Newark; they are citizens of Newark. That's where they spend their energy and that's all they care about." (a drugstore manager in his early 40's)

6. Signs of Community Strength

- (a) "Everyone could adjust to change if they wanted to" (a man in his late 20's)
- (b) "My wife and I have learned to accept change. We like city life and we like Weequahic" (middle aged mechanic whose wife works for an industrial concern)
- (c) "There is a better class of colored people moving into this community. They are buying homes under the \$20,000 or more. I think they will improve conditions. They are interested in working and living as residents of a community". (a restaurateur in his early 30's)

c. Since no informal or natural leaders were identified, additional steps were taken:

1. Profiles of individuals likely to be concerned with the community were developed:

- (a) Research from projects conducted by General Electric in efforts to determine what community characteristics were of primary importance in the company's community evaluation in their program of decentralization.
 - (b) University seminars
 - (c) Community development projects (personal interviews)
 - (1) National Council of Churches, Mr. Ben Landis, Executive Director
 - (2) Near East Foundation, Mr. Allen, Exec. Director
 - (3) International Cooperation Administration, Mr. Ray Brown
 - (4) Farmers Union, John Eklund, Educational Director
 - (d) examples:
 - (1) Family with young children
 - (2) Family owning and proud of their own home
 - (3) Family with one or more members gainfully employed, which lives within its budget
 - (4) Family participating in more than one community activity.
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| (a) Business | (d) School |
| (b) Church | (e) Social |
| (c) Civic | (f) Family |

2. Cooperative efforts with Newark industry

- (a) with cooperation of executives, records of employees residing in Weequahic area were reviewed
- (b) Only those companies with which the consultants had top-level personal contact were used.

(c) Examples

- (1) A dairy
- (2) a life insurance company
- (3) a department store
- (4) a manufacturing company

- (d) Interesting bi-product was the interest of officers in accuracy of their personnel records.

3. Cooperative efforts with medical specialists in reviewing patients from Weequahic area.

- (a) Believing that the length of the doctor-patient relationship was important, orthopedic surgeons were selected as our target.
- (b) Two orthopedic specialists of national renown spent many hours, with the consultants, reviewing their files.
- (c) It is important to note that both of these surgeons were amazed at the number of patients who had moved from the Weequahic area in the past year.
- (d) Both of the surgeons had been born and raised in Newark, one in the Weequahic area.

4. Cooperative efforts with organized groups in the Weequahic area.

- (a) It should be noted that the methods used were similar if not identical to those described by Irwin T. Saunders, Harvard University (Am Soc Review) Vol. XXV, No. 1, February 1960

III. Pertinent findings from all approaches.

- a. Interviews in situ disclosed the following clues which seemed to warrant further investigation prior to acceptance.

1. Immaturity of those interviewed:

- (a) no realization of the diminishing effect of technological progress in:

- (1) time (infinite)
(2) space (universe)

- (b) lack of responsibility for the giant "city hall", and the resulting frustration.

2. Inertia or lethargy regarding:

- (a) lack of leadership
(b) tendency to accept change which they perceive as synonymous to death.
(c) acceptance of frustration:
(1) anger and hostility

- (a) "God damn the Mayor and all his commissions! I've given them too much of my time in the past. For what? Nothing!"

- (b) "Submission: what's to be will be so we'll sell out and move away".

- (c) skepticism: "We're interested and will participate if we're free when the meetings are scheduled, but we think it's useless"

IV. Brotherhood Week

- a. At a request from the Commission, the consultants provided a speaker and discussion leader for a community meeting held under the aegis of the Mayors' Commission on Group Relations during Brotherhood Week, February 25, 1960.

b. Important findings regarding this meeting:

1. Resentment of residents toward unscrupulous techniques of real estate salesmen (scare selling it)
2. Educational facilities declining.
3. Play or recreational facilities inadequate
4. Lack of challenge to high school students in Weequahic area

- (a) stagnation of leadership
(b) ineffectiveness of community organizations

5. The responsibility of the Mayors' Commission on Group Relations to do something about the situation in Weequahic.